

6 March 2019



Hon David Clark
Minister of Health
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160

Email: d.clark@ministers.govt.nz

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you to seek clarification about the status of disability supports for disabled people, specifically whether cuts to disability support services are being considered.

Access to timely, flexible and skilled support is critical for many disabled people to enjoy full citizenship. Including living independently, participating in community, and equal employment opportunities.

Recent communication from disabled people has raised the concern that available supports which are already often difficult to access without delays or restrictions, may soon be subject to further constraints which would have a negative impact on disabled people's lives. Independent financial analysis by of disability support service funding suggests an existing shortfall in funding of at least 12%¹.

The Independent Monitoring Mechanism on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, (CRPD) is currently drafting its report on New Zealand's implementation of the CRPD. It would be a matter of significant concern and comment if rather than making progress in the availability of necessary supports there were to be retrograde losses.

I hope to receive your assurance that disabled people's rights will not be curtailed through reduced supports. If changes to the nature or volume of supports are under consideration, I would appreciate confirmation that these will be developed in alignment with human rights principles and our international obligations. These require

- Adherence to principles of personal dignity and autonomy;
- Self-determination for Māori and,

¹ Funding and Financial Analysis: New Zealand Disability Support Providers – Deloitte Report

- The full involvement of people that the system is intended to serve, in the design implementation, evaluation and accountability mechanisms at every point in the process and appropriately resourcing such involvement in a sustainable way

The Human Rights Commission is happy to offer assistance, alongside disabled people and disability support organisations, if this would be useful in ensuring a human rights consistent approach guides all stages of any impending changes to available support options.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Paula', with a stylized, flowing script.

Paula Tesoriero MNZM
Disability Rights Commissioner

Cc: j.genter@ministers.govt.nz
c.sepuloni@ministers.govt.nz
g.robertson@ministers.govt.nz
[Mathew Parr@moh.govt.nz](mailto:Mathew_Parr@moh.govt.nz)